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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY,
APRIL 2, 2003

¶11. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 2, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

¶12. Radikal/Milliyet: The U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Report for 2002 has been published. The section covering Turkey emphasized that the government, in general, was respectful toward human rights and had realized some fundamental reforms. However, torture, use of excessive force and paucity in accountability for crimes committed by security forces still remained as serious problems. It is reported that State Department's annual Human Rights Report used to have a serious effect in the world, but because the US also has been violating human rights in the operations it has undertaken in various countries questions have been raised about the credibility of the report. The State Department draws heavily in its report on information gathered in Turkey by the Human Rights Foundation, Human Rights Association, and Amnesty International. Newspapers go into considerable detail about the kudos and criticisms directed at Turkey in the report.

¶13. Radikal: 48 planes and 1,400 soldiers deployed at Incirlik AB for Operation Northern Watch are ready to leave the base within the week depending on the consequence of developments with Colin Powell's visit to Turkey. The US had built up an immense amount of military equipment prior the war at the base, which has not been allowed by the Turkish government to be used in air strikes against Iraq.

¶14. Milli Gazete: A US Prowler plane made an emergency landing at Incirlik AB last night. Tight security measures were taken around the runway and, after landing, fire brigades surrounded the plane, at the rear of which flames could be seen. The plane taxied to the hangar half an hour later, and it took off from the base around midnight. Two C-130 cargo planes took off from the base early morning as well.

¶15. Milli Gazete: Siirt Governorate has been giving classes in 59 subjects at its Public Training Center for free. Regarding the issue, Siirt Governor Nuri Okutan said the percentage of children enrolled in preschool education increased, as did the percentage of girls enrolled in schools. In addition, the Governorate has tried to reach out to around 6,000 women and young girls without education by involving them in weaving cooperatives and multipurpose social centers.

¶16. Evrensel/Cumhuriyet/Turkiye: Dagyani villagers of Sanliurfa who threw stones and eggs at US experts coming from Incirlik AB to remove fragments of a missile that erroneously fell nearby the village were detained by jandarma and released by the court after a hearing. Sanliurfa human rights activists reacted angrily to the interrogations of the villagers and demanded a similar response be shown to the US military, which is threatening the physical security of the people with missiles.

¶17. Evrensel: Van's former administrator of HADEP, Bazi Aslan, and a City Councilmember,

Cihat Kara, were each sentenced to 10 months of imprisonment on the charges of "resisting the police" during a press conference on the occasion of World's Women's Day on March 8.

18. Milliyet: During a fashion show at the opening of a sportswear shop in Adana, models from Istanbul and Izmir protested the war in Iraq. The models opened a banner reading "Let there be no wars. Do not let children die." at the fashion show, which was attended by prominent people from Adana.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

19. Turkiye/Bolge: Mersin Municipality is planning to open a tender for the town's Wastewater Treatment Plant on April 4. Mersin Mayor Macit Ozcan said they would realize the project with a Euro 60 million loan. Mayor Ozcan said six qualifying companies would compete for the project, which will serve a municipal population of 750,000 people. Meanwhile, Mersin Municipality signed an MOU with a Canadian company for constructing a garbage-processing plant. The plant will produce heat and energy to be used in Mersin.

HOLTZ